

DRAFT

Webster Agricultural Commission Minutes - February 7, 2013

Attendees: Acting Chair Susan Roberts, Secretary Sarah Chalsma, Member Susan Roman, Alternate member Therese Larson

Acting Chair Roberts called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Minutes from January meeting were unanimously accepted.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Secretary Chalsma gave an update on two surveys the Ag Commission is currently working on. Due to an email error, the Farmers Market surveys did not get to the printers in time for the January Grapevine mailing. The surveys are complete as of today [2/7] and Sue Roberts will pick them up at RC Brayshaw early next week. The older surveys regarding the Ag Commission have been entered into a database and the information will be tabulated and finalized by next week. Member Roman suggested putting both surveys and the results from the older survey online. Secretary Chalsma will look into that. Meanwhile, the Farmers Market surveys will be in the March Grapevine.

Secretary Chalsma has sent up an email account for the Agricultural Commission. The address is: websteragcomm@gmail.com It is currently available. All members can have access to the account with a password.

The Ag Commission discussed next steps for the Farmers Market but it was agreed on by all that we need to see the results of the surveys before we proceed. One suggestion for further discussion was to hold the Farmers Market every other week instead of every week.

Discussion continued from previous meetings regarding the partnership with the WES PTO and the Ag Commission to develop a school garden. The biggest hinderance has been a space to use for the garden but Alternate Member Larson suggested planting in containers, which can be located in the best conditions we can find at school with no worries about having a permanent location. Another concern has been what veggies to plant and when - with attention to harvest time. Member Roberts suggested starting small with only one or two crops to be planted in the early spring which could be harvested before school lets out. A couple of suggestions are peas and lettuce. Then do a second planting of fall harvest veggies at the beginning of the next school year, September 2013, and harvest another crop in the fall. This will eliminate the problems of storing food after harvest and who will tend the garden during the summer break. As Secretary Chalsma is the liaison between the Ag Comm and the PTO, she will discuss these ideas at the next PTO meeting. The PTO has been looking into grants to fund this type of project. Hopefully the spring planting can be incorporated in the school Earth Day celebration.

Town Meeting is approaching. Who will speak if needed? It was suggested that Chair Terrazano-Bowe should be prepared to do this, if necessary.

Member Susan Roman asked if she could change her Ag Commission status to Alternate Member. The other Ag Commission members agreed she could and Member Roman will give a letter to the Selectmen for this purpose. Member Roman said she still is interested in being an active alternate member.

The Ag Commission discussed better ways to communicate if we would all be at a meeting. Member Roman advised that other committees and boards are required to let the Chair know if they would not be attending. It is the responsibility of the Chair to announce meetings and make sure that enough members will be attending for a quorum. All members present agreed.

Mason Donovan approached an Ag Commission member to ask if we can help get the word out about his fair, Art-iculture, which will be held on June 8, 2013. There was a great turnout at last years fair held at the Meeting House.

ACTION ITEMS

- Member Roberts will pick up Farmers Market surveys at Brayshaws
- Who is bringing the surveys to Dee for the Grapevine?
- Secretary Chalsma will look into having all survey information online as soon as possible (definitely before Town Meeting)
- Secretary Chalsma will discuss the school garden plans at the next PTO meeting [2/19]
- Chairperson Terrazano-Bowe will prepare (with help if necessary) to speak at Town Meeting
- Chairperson Terrazano-Bowe will further be in charge of attendance for the monthly meetings

The next Ag Commission meeting will be held on Thursday, March 7 at 7:00 pm in the Library
The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm